

Rap as Activism by Tommy Vercetti

A photograph of a rapper performing on stage at night. The rapper is in the foreground, seen from the back, wearing a dark jacket, and is illuminated by a strong red stage light. The background shows a large, dark crowd of people at a concert, with some stage lights visible in the distance.

Rap as Activism

from a musician &
fan perspective

more precisely how can Rap have a genuinely
emancipatory impact?

depends on circumstances

given & non-alternable | or
dynamic social reality?

avoiding insurgent circumstances =
late (western) capitalism characteristic?

depends on circumstances

redundant or circular
question remains the same

How can Rap have an Emancipatory Impact ?

How
?

Emancipatory
?

Impact
?

first a rapper secondly political

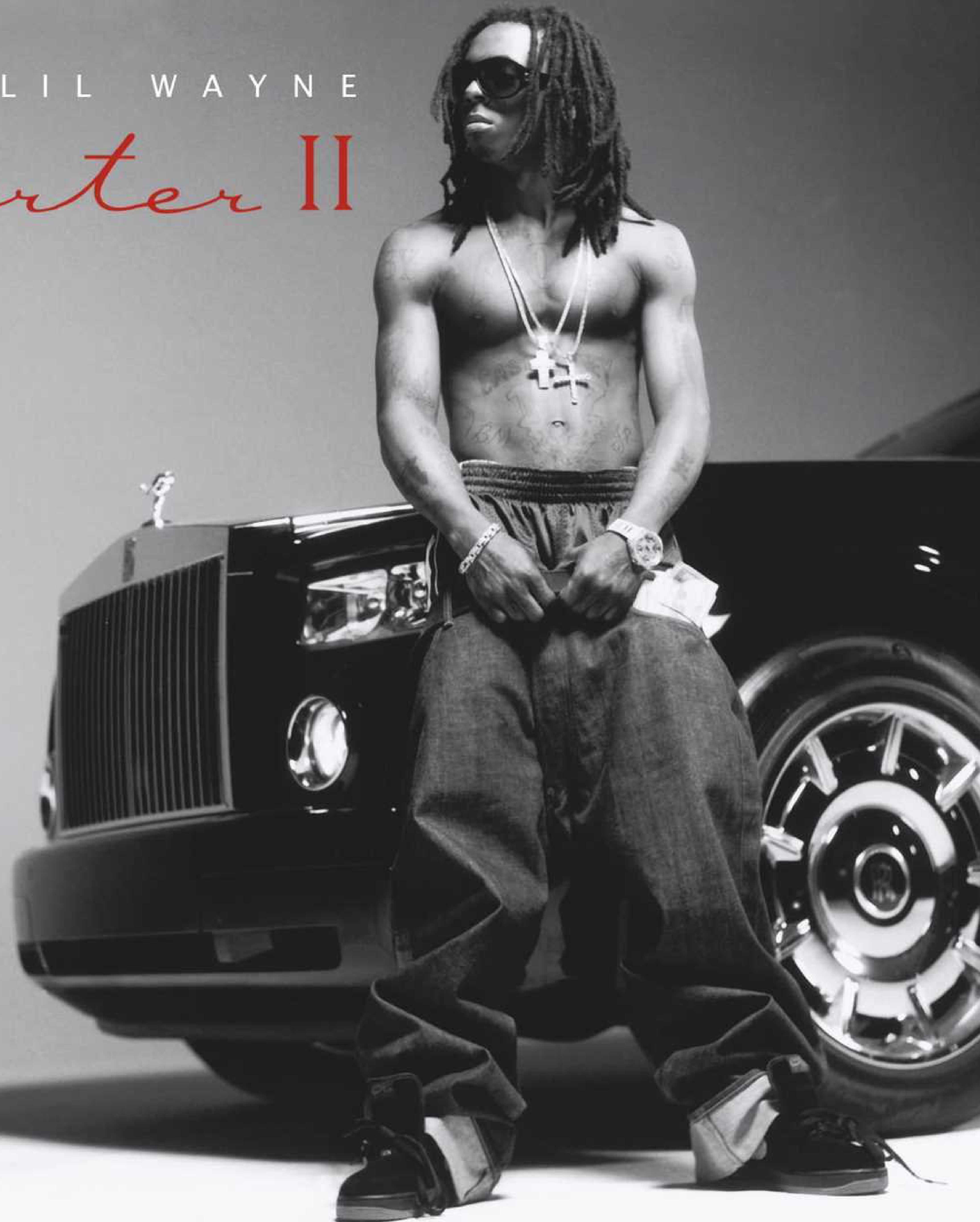


first a rapper

- I love rap
- I don't love politics
- I am moved by rap
- I am affected by politics
- I am a political rapper
- I am not a rapping politician

L I L W A Y N E

tha Carter II



A man with a serious expression, wearing a dark, long-sleeved button-down shirt, stands with his hands outstretched at waist level. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

POPPA

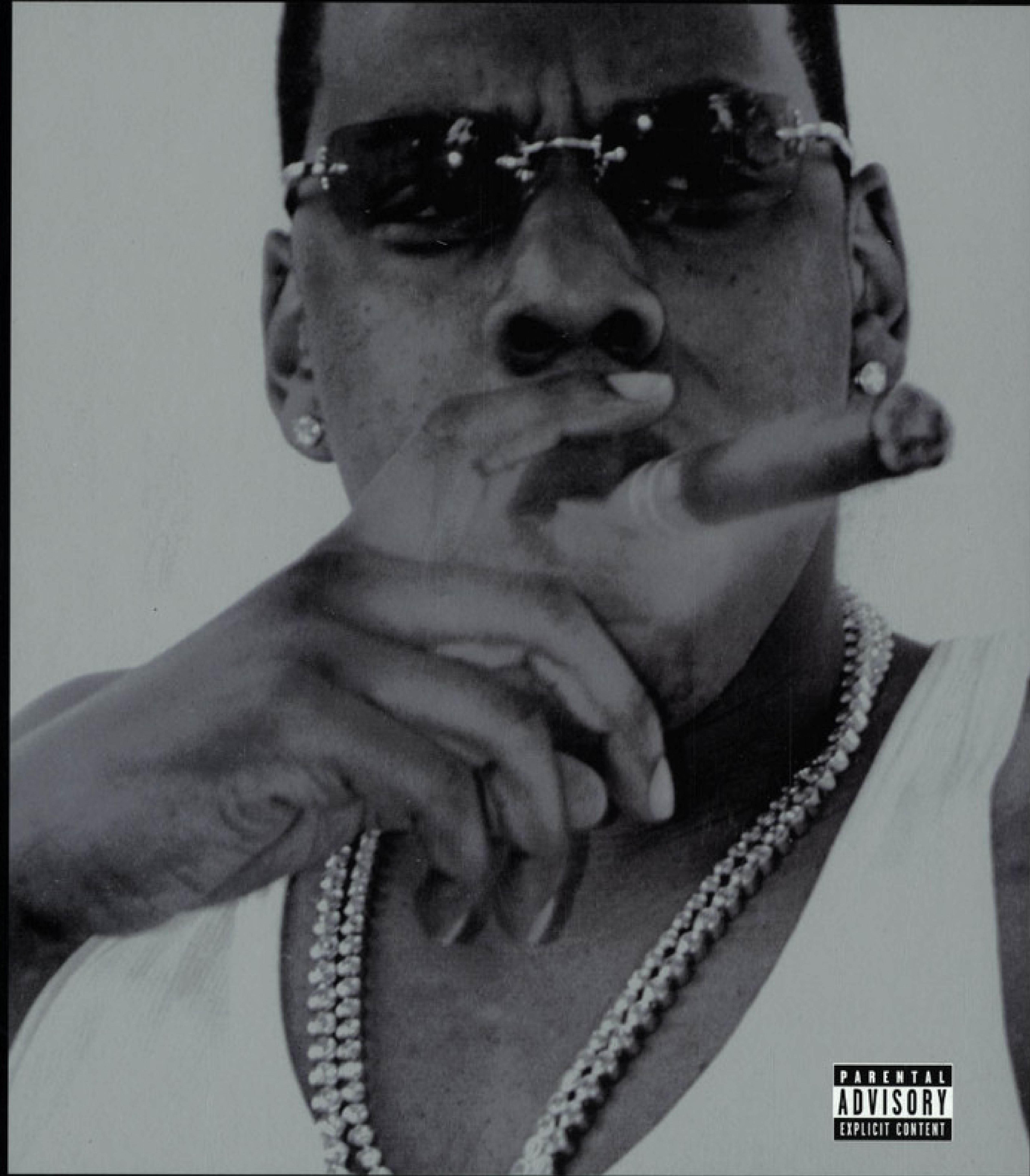
big remix

PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT LYRICS

t h e n o t o r i o u s b i g

JAY-Z

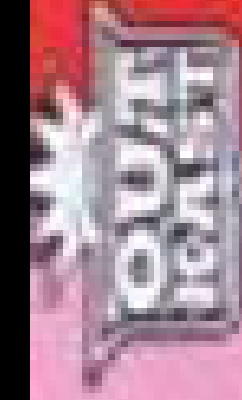
BIG PIMPIN'



PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

ARISTA

The Love Below



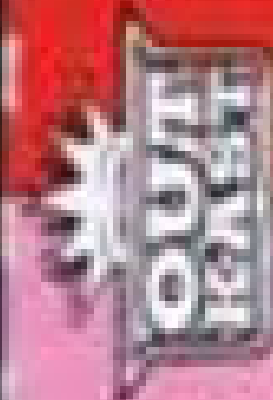
Speakerbunny

82876 52905 2



ARISTA

The Love Below



Speakerbunny

82876 52905 2

Get Rich Or Die Tryin'

**50
CENT**

**PARENTAL
ADVISORY**
EXPLICIT CONTENT

favourite rappers Lil Wayne
Notorious BIG
Jay Z
Andre 3000
50 Cent

beat
performance
poetics
Aesthetics
sensual
emotional
musical

How

>

Aesthetics

Emancipatory

?

Impact

?

genuinely

How
>
Aesthetics

beautiful
masterful
heartfelt

Emancipatory
?

Impact
?

parenthesis – in defense of gangsta rap

giving an art form
to their circumstances of living
under these circumstances

= an aestheticized form!

to a reality that until then was
and still would be invisible

to a reality that wasn't intended for art
and that art wasn't intended for

to a reality that became paradigmatic
for late capitalism / neoliberalism

expression instead of right
staging of change instead of change
spectacle instead of good life

Aestheticization of Politics originally regarding the Nazi Regime
Walter Benjamin | Peter Reichel

philosophical tradition
aesthetics = appearance = illusion

Aesthetic Capitalism

the aesthetic & affective is commodity
a key element of late capitalism

the aesthetic & affective
sustains & legitimizes capitalism

the rebellious, subversive, ethical is
part of the aesthetic & affective

Gernot Böhme | Andreas Reckwitz

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problems

Aestheticization of Politics
Aesthetic Capitalism

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Aestheticization of Politics
Aesthetic Capitalism

objections

anti-aesthetics failed
avant garde failed
ironic strategies failed

genuinely emancipatory

axiom of equality

genuine self-determination & democracy
an equal say in whatever affects you
requirements fulfilled to perform

permanent liberation from all obstacles
exploitation, oppression, discrimination

private property = command structure
money = co-decision unit

collectivization of production means
by people councils, not by state

permanent liberation

expropriation of production means
by power and not by violence
by law and general strike

only way to avoid failure, absorption,
instrumentalization, rollbacks

	How > Aesthetics	Emancipatory > Collectivization	Impact ?
genuinely	beautiful masterful heartfelt		
problems	Aestheticization of Politics Aesthetic Capitalism		
objections	anti-aesthetics failed avant garde failed ironic strategies failed		

genuinely
problems
objections

How
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Aesthetics

Emancipatory
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Collectivization

Impact
?

beautiful
masterful
heartfelt

street
struggle
eclectic

Aestheticization of Politics
Aesthetic Capitalism

anti-aesthetics failed
avant garde failed
ironic strategies failed



Capitalist Realism

rap = cultural expression of the
alternative-less capitalism

1. descriptive & resigned | or
2. cynical & celebrating

NY 70's = neoliberalism lab
Mark Fisher | Fredric Jameson

Catharsis Predicament

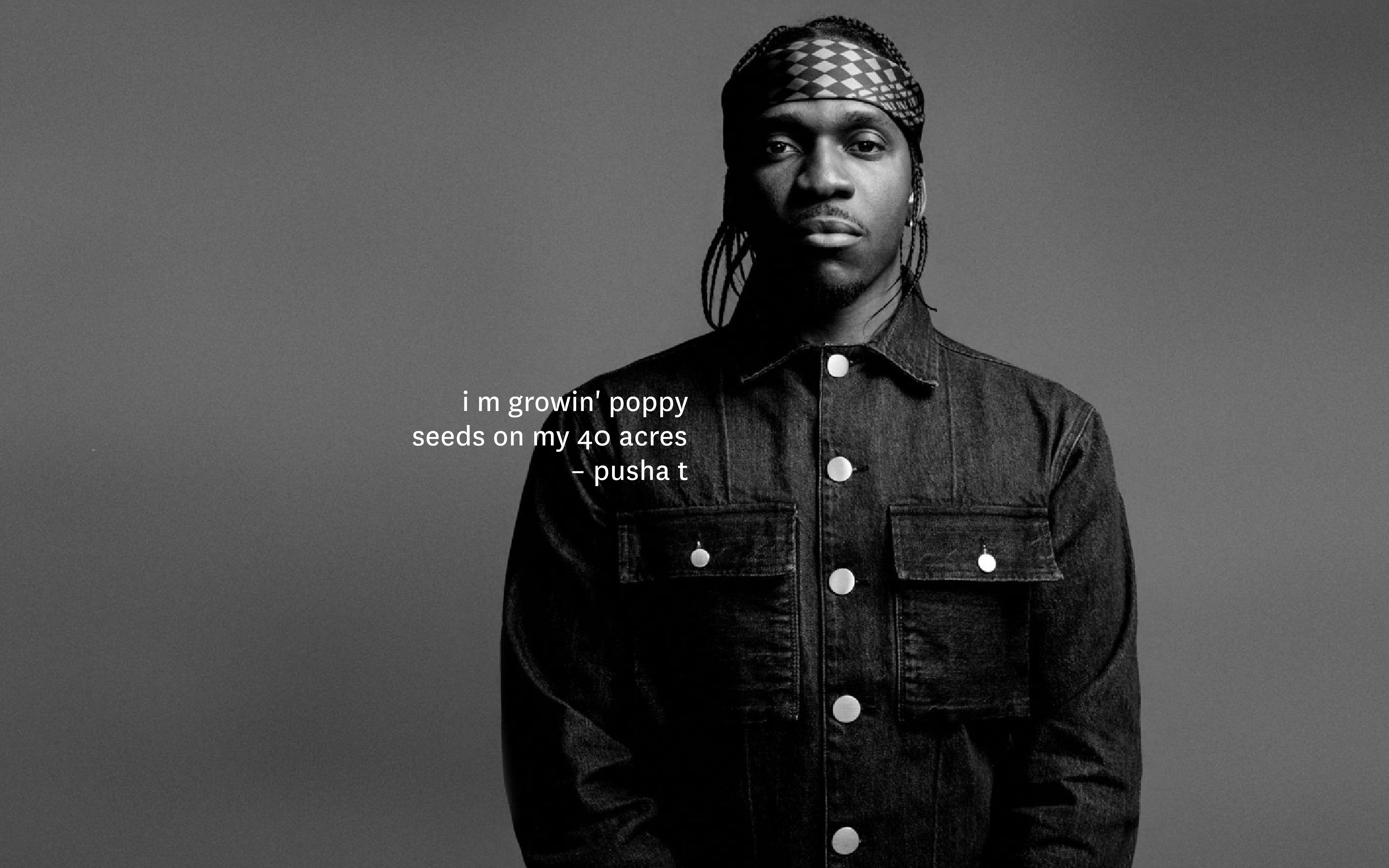
1. empathetic >
sedative, catharsis, naturalisation

2. non-empathetic >
alienation, rejection, cynicism

Bertolt Brecht | O.K. Werckmeister

my orange box cutter
makes the world go round
– sky is the limit



A black and white portrait of the rapper Pusha T. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He has long dreadlocks and is wearing a dark, button-up denim jacket with two chest pockets. On his head, he wears a patterned bandana. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

i m growin' poppy
seeds on my 40 acres
– pusha t

Critique of the Future

Cartesian Perspective

to analyse and judge the world
from an individual, outside
and non-affected point of view

impossible for social reality

to bring reality into line with a
Cartesian future vision is a main
characteristic of oppressive systems

the materialized vision (f.e. a work of art)
can be abused to subjugate/sacrifice
individuals to the envisioned end goal

Karl-Heinz Brodbeck

genuinely
problems
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Critique of the Future

positive rap failed
positive music failed
‹negative› vision

Impact
?

impact criteria

make alternatives thinkable
make arguments comprehensible
convince & mobilize politically
reach masses / critical size

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Impact
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Mobilization

masses
global
accessible

Culture Industry

even art is commodity
even art is mass media apt
therefore
contaminated, non-subversive

Theodor W. Adorno & Max Horkheimer

Figleaf & Catharsis

art & critique serve
to mask the bad state of affairs
to release emotions
to silence consciousness

O.K. Werckmeister

Absorption & Renewal

- art & critique serve
- to affirm the liberal image
- to develop new commodities & markets
- to learn from mistakes
- to survive & evolve

Luc Boltanski & Eve Chiapello

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ivory tower failed
consensus ≠ populism
indifference of profit

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außer uns
FIONA JEFFRIES
Gespräche mit
Carolyn Emcke
David Harvey
Silvia Federici u. a.

ISP

PapyRossa

promedia

39.-

Helmut Dahmer
Pseudonatur und Kritik
Freud, Marx und die Gegenwart

34.-

**Jean-Michel
Palmier
Walter Benjamin**
Suhrkamp taschenbuch
wissenschaft

10.-

**Theodor W.
ADORNO**

Mit einem Nachwort von Volker Weiß

»Die Menschen in Deutschland scheinen
in einer immerwährenden Angst um ihre nationale
Identität zu leben.« *Theodor W. Adorno*

»Mehr als ein halbes Jahrhundert später besticht
noch die Gültigkeit einer Analyse, die sich
passagenweise wie ein Kommentar zu aktuellen
Entwicklungen liest.« *Volker Weiß*

**Aspekte
des neuen
Rechts-
radikalismus**
Suhrkamp



20.-

Herbert Renz-Polster

**ERZIEHUNG
PRÄGT
GESINNUNG**

Wie der weltweite
Rechtsruck
entstehen konnte –
und wie wir ihn
aufhalten können

K Kösel

18.-

DEUTSCH

MATTHIAS QUENT

LAND

Wie die Rechten nach der Macht greifen
und wie wir sie stoppen können

RECHTS

26.-

HARALD JÄGER



WOLFSZEIT

DEUTSCHLAND UND
DIE DEUTSCHEN
1945-1955

VON ADORNO
BIS WITTGENSTEIN
Philosophische Profile

G.W.F. Hegel
Grundlinien der
Philosophie des Rechts

Andrea Röpke, Andreas Speit
**Völkische
Landnahme**

Alte Sippen,
junge Siedler,
rechte Ökos

Ch. Links Verlag

CORNELIA KOPPETSCH
**DIE GESELLSCHAFT
DES ZORNS**

RECHTSPOPULISMUS
IM GLOBALEN ZEITALTER

obvious as the distinctive field of art
visual, literature, music, rap

it's not *what* is said
it's what is said *how*

preliminary conclusion
the political lies in the aesthetics

by which aesthetic means?
words, rhyme patterns, vocal melody,
delivery, vocal color, instruments,
drums, rhythm, tempo, samples, etc

thank you & stay safe